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LETTER DATED 22 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to inform you that on 14 August 1997, at the invitation of the Government of Georgia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yevgeny Primakov, arrived in Tbilisi. He was accompanied by a delegation of Abkhaz authorities headed by Mr. Vladislav Ardzinba.

The negotiations were held between the delegations of the parties, with the participation of the Russian Foreign Minister and also personally, between the President of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, and Mr. Vladislav Ardzinba. A joint statement was signed as a result (see annex).

The Tbilisi meeting came about as a result of the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, and with the efforts of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

The Government of Georgia views this round of negotiations as a significant political event, the major achievement of which was the overcoming of the complex psychological barrier.

A good perspective has emerged also for the negotiations on the economic reconstruction of the region, held as a sequel to the Tbilisi meeting, upon the arrival of the State Minister of Georgia and the Ministers of Energetic, Transportation and Communication to Sukhumi.

The Tbilisi meeting has proved the necessity to develop the Geneva process, a course of peaceful dialogue, which instils hope that the efforts of the Russian Federation and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia, under the auspices of the United Nations, will yield fruitful results.

May I ask your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) George VOLSKI
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement on the meeting between the Georgian and Abkhaz parties

(Tbilisi, 14 August 1997)

The parties note with satisfaction that the arrival in Tbilisi of the Abkhaz delegation headed by V. Ardzinba and its negotiations with the Georgian delegation headed by E. Shevardnadze, with the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Y. Primakov, will undoubtedly give positive impetus to the process of a peaceful settlement.

The participants in the meeting noted with satisfaction the role of the Russian Federation in the Georgian-Abkhaz settlement, as clearly manifested in the initiative by the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin, of 1 August 1997.

On the anniversary of the start of armed actions in Abkhazia, 14 August 1997, the representatives of the Georgian and Abkhaz parties declare their determination to put an end to the conflict that has divided them and restore relations of peace and mutual respect.

The parties are convinced that the time has come to embark on a course leading to peace and prosperity, and, with a sense of dignity and mutual tolerance, to act jointly in a spirit of compromise and reconciliation.

The parties have assumed an obligation not to resort to arms to resolve the differences that divide them and not under any circumstances to permit a renewal of bloodshed. Any differences of opinion will be resolved exclusively by peaceful political means, through negotiations and consultations both on a bilateral basis and with the assistance and facilitation of the Russian Federation, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of representatives of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

It was noted that it had been possible to reach agreement on a number of key problems of the settlement. At the same time, on certain issues substantial differences still remain.

The parties agreed on the need to maintain constant for the purpose of resolving the problems that gave rise to the conflict.

For the Georgian side:

E. Shevardnadze

For the Abkhaz side:

V. Ardzinba